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UNCLAS MUSCAT 000802

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARPI, NEA/PPD, NEA/P, P, PA, SA/PPD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [PREL](#) [KMDR](#) [SOCI](#) [OIIP](#) [KISL](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: OUTREACH FOLLOWING NEWSWEEK'S RETRACTION

REF: A. STATE 090992

[1](#)B. MUSCAT 777

Embassy Actions

[1](#)1. The Embassy e-mailed copies of the May 16 Washington File to all six major daily newspapers in the Sultanate, and hand-delivered the article entitled "Newsweek Report of Quran's Desecration Called Erroneous (Pentagon says report is wrong, magazine expresses regret)" to the editors of each newspaper. The article also appears prominently on the front page of the Embassy's website under the "Middle East and North Africa" breaking news section.

Little Local Traction

[1](#)2. An article appeared below the fold on the front page of the government-owned Arabic-language daily "Oman" on May 17, announcing Newsweek's apology but also reporting that British Muslim detainees confirmed the desecration by U.S. military interrogators. The privately -owned Arabic-language daily "al-Watan" carried a much shorter story on page 37 of its May 17 edition about the Pentagon finding no evidence to substantiate the allegations. The English-language daily "Times of Oman" ran a front-page article on May 17 under the headline "Skepticism As Newsweek Backtracks," reporting on the reluctance of Muslims in Afghanistan and Pakistan to believe the retraction was due to anything other than USG pressure.

[1](#)3. Discussions of the original allegations have lost steam on the Internet message board "Al Sablah," with fewer than ten responses over the past twenty-four hours.

BALTIMORE